

THE
Christian History;

Containing Accounts of the Propagation and Revival
of Religion in *Great Britain, America, &c.*

Saturday SEPTEMBER 8. 1744. § N^o. 80.

*The Remainder of the Extract from the Reverend Mr.
Mc Laurin's Letter.*

“THE much longed-for ATTESTATION to the Revival has excited, as I have good Ground to think, the Thanksgivings of many; as it contains not only so satisfying Proofs, but likewise so edifying Descriptions of it, removing Misrepresentations of the Sentiments and Conduct of the Promoters and Subjects of it, and tending thro’ divine Grace, to promote and spread such blessed Things as it relates. It seems evidently subservient to these good Ends, not only that such Numbers of the Assertors of the Revival attended the Assembly, but also that several of the same Sentiments, and furnished with like Materials, were absent, as this has occasioned a Number of very edifying particular Narratives, of such Value, that it would have been a great Pity if the Publick had wanted them. And it has been justly observed here that the *whole*, with other late Compositions, affords Matter of Praise to Him, (who has received Gifts for Men) for favouring *New-England* with such a Number of shining and burning Lights.”

Extract of a Letter from the Reverend Mr. Willison of Dundee, to the Reverend Mr. Prince.

Dundee, March 17, 1744.

"I Hope that excellent TESTIMONY of the venerable Assembly at *Boston*, the 7th of *July* last, with the concurring ATTESTATIONS, from other Ministers not then present, will contribute, thro' the Blessing of God, to re-
 E c Vive.

vive, support and confirm the Hearts of many of the Lord's People, and stop the Mouths of Gainfayers.

The worthy Mr. *Edwards of Northampton*, in his late Book, as well as in his former Writings, hath done eminent Service to the Church of God this Way. O may the Lord spare him long, and strengthen him for further Service of this Kind!

In the *West of Scotland*, in several Parishes, there hath been a Work of the same Nature with your's, and hitherto (blessed be God) without the Errors and Disorders, which have been in some Parts of your Country; but the Extent and Spread of the Work hath been yet small in Respect of what it hath been with you. But we have great Ground of Thankfulness, that the Fruits and Effects of the Work in *Scotland*, still appear to be very desirable in the most Part, who have been Subjects of it. Tho' alas! we have Ground of Sorrow and Regret for the Opposition made thereto by our seceding Brethren; as if it was all Delusion, or the Work of an evil Spirit. They are now turned so very narrow in their Charity, that they will not hold Communion with any others, nor allow that the Holy Ghost doth attend the Ministry of any but their own, or those of their Way of thinking, about every Point of Church Management: which hath brought them to join Hands, with those they formerly seemed most averse from, in reproaching the glorious Work of God's sovereign free Grace, both in *Scotland* and *America*.

O that we were helped to carry them to the Throne of Grace, and there wrestle with the Lord, to open their Eyes, change their Minds and Tongues, and of his Mercy begin the blessed Work (which they despise) among their own Followers! Whose Concern and Zeal at present seem to be more for *Externals* than *Essentials*.

Extract of a Letter from two eminent Booksellers in the City of Edinburgh to the Reverend Mr. Moorhead.

Edinburg, Febr. 10. 1743,4;

“AS for the present State of Religion in *Scotland*, you will readily understand something of it, by the Reverend Mr. *Robe's* Monthly Christian History. However, we thought fit in this Way to inform you, that Religion is thriving

thriving among the young People in this City, and the Country round about ; many of whom have of late set up Societies for Prayer and religious Conference : And as some more ancient Christians do frequently visit those Meetings, they give from Time to Time very comfortable Accounts, as to the Knowledge and Fervency which prevails among them, and the beautiful Order with which their Societies are conducted.

But besides this, we had last Week very comfortable News from the North : In *Ross-shire, Sutherland, Caithness*, and other Places thereabout, the same good Work is beginning among the young Ones ; and even sundry old Sinners have of late been touched. There is one Parish in the remote Highlands, remarkable for its being of the greatest Bounds of any in *Scotland*, (for the Extent of it including Isles &c. is said to be above 100 Miles in Circumference) we say we are informed that this Parish has been greatly favour'd of late. They have now no Minister ; but their School-master, who is a pious Man, has travel'd amongst them, and instructed them to a great Degree ; so that from 6 Years of Age to 80, they are (at least great Numbers of them) thirsting after the Knowledge of God, and the Way of Salvation by Jesus Christ. They have formed Societies in sundry Places ; according as their Contiguity does best Answer for their Meeting. There they pray, sing Psalms, and instruct one another. Their School-master goes round them ; so that through the Year, he is not a Sabbath of ten at his own House. His Presbytery (because the Parish has no Minister at present) allows him to explain the Scriptures he reads, which has been a great Benefit to the formerly poor ignorant Creatures ; whom he calls also to give their own Thoughts on sundry Passages of Scripture : By this Means Light is conveyed in a familiar Way from one Person to another.

The Name of this extended Parish is *Lochbroom*, and the Name of the School-master is Mr. *Hugh Cameron*, whom one of us is well acquainted with, and know him to be vastly useful in another Part of the Highland Country, where he formerly resided.

Tho. Lumisden
Jo. Robertson.

A REGULAR ZEAL in Matters of Religion justified, and vindicated from the Charge of Enthusiasm, Madness, Dissimulation, and placing the whole of Religion in such Fervours, and of aiming at ill Ends. An Extract from a Discourse, of the Reverend Mr. JOHN WILSON, concerning internal Illumination, and other Operations of the Holy Spirit &c. being an Appendix to his Scriptures genuine Interpreter asserted.

S E C T. I.

I Come now to speak something of the Prejudices taken at those *Fervours* that appear in some in the Exercises of Religion, breaking forth in earnest and pathetical Expressions, whether in bewailing of Sin, or petitioning for Mercy, Thanksgiving for Blessings received, or dispensing the Word of Reconciliation to the People. This is sharply censured by *Lud. Walzogen*, as favouring of Enthusiasm, or bordering upon Frenzy, and *cunningly designed for the driving on of some ambitious Ends.*

To this I reply, We are commanded to be *servant in Spirit, serving the Lord*: * and that *whatsoever our Hand findeth to do, we should do it with our Might.* † The Psalmist says, *I cried with my whole Heart.* ‡ And even that heathen Prince, to whose royal City the Prophet *Jonah* was sent with a threatening Message, requires his Subjects to *cry mightily unto God.* † The Apostle says, *It is good to be zealously affected always in a good Thing.* * And is there any thing so good, as that it can better challenge the height and heat of our Affections and Endeavours than Religion, in the Services whereof we have so immediately to do with God, who calls for the Heart, and hath declared his abhorring of a dull, luke-warm Temper? ‖ I grant, that it is too possible for Zeal to have its Excesses and Irregularities: And among the rest, there is an indiscreet Zeal sometimes appearing in some well-meaning Persons, that wants the Conduct of a well-order'd Judgment: which as I take to be much more pardonable than a careless or prophane Indifferency; so I conceive it may have ministred some Occasion to those vile Reproaches that are cast upon all that are seriously and heartily religious.

* Rom. 12. 11. ‖ Eccl. 9. 10. † Psal. 119. 145. † Jon. 3. 8. * Gal. 4. 18. ‖ Rev. 3. 15, 16.

But that fervor of Spirit that I undertake for, and assert to be not only justifiable, but commendable in the Duties of Religion, is that which is raised by a right apprehension of the Object about which it is conversant, guided by a composed Understanding, and attended with an humble awful Reverence becoming sinful Dust in its appearance before the great and holy God.

Should not Sinners in their Addresses to the most High, have their Hearts deeply touch'd with Sorrow for the Sins that they apprehend themselves, or others for whom they are concern'd, to be guilty of, or liable to? Doth it become an Offender, that is to beg his Pardon, to do it in a stupid Manner, as if he had no more Sense of his Fault than a Stone or a Brute? And what Incongruity is it for us in our Petitions for Mercy, to have our Desires raised to the highest Pitch that we can reach? Is the pardoning and purifying Grace of Christ of so little Worth or Use to us, as they need be but coldly or carelessly askt, as if our Words freezed between our Lips, or as if we did not greatly care whether we were heard or no? Or can we expect that God should hear those Petitions, which we our selves scarce feel when they go from us? Did ever any Malefactor plead at the Bar for his Life, or an hunger-starv'd Beggar crave an Alms at the Door, after this dull and sleepy Rate? And when we are blessing God for his Benefits, should we not with the Psalmist, call upon all our Powers to praise him?† And should not those, whose Work it is to dispense the Word of Life, deliver their Message in such a Manner, as that their Hearers may discern that they are in good earnest, and that the Word spoken to them is that whereon their eternal Life or Death depends? Is it not requisite that the Servants of Christ should, in this Work, be (as is recorded for the Honour of Apollos) *servant in Spirit*; || especially considering the quality of most Hearers, who are so hardly raised to a due Point of Zeal and Fervency, that (as Mr. George Herbert speaks) *they need a Mountain of Fire to kindle them*. The said worthy Author adviseth Preachers to make choice of *moving and ravishing Texts*: and to *dip and season all their Words and Sentences in their Hearts before they come into their Mouths*.

† Psal. 103. || Act. 18. 2.

truly affecting, and cordially expressing all that they say, so that the Auditors may plainly perceive that every Word is Heart-deep: with other Passages of like Import. In short, what Cause of Blame is it for any in the Exercise of Devotion, whether publick or private, to endeavour what they can to have their own and others Hearts affected in some Measure suitable to the Work in Hand, and to have their Expressions in some due Proportion answerable to the Affections of their Hearts? This is all I plead for; and the utmost (as far as I know) that can be charged upon the *generality* of the Persons accus'd. What some particular here and there may be guilty of, I am not concern'd to vindicate. That there are many Follies and Extravagancies in some of all Perswasions, he must be a great Stranger in the World that knows not; and miserably enslaved to the Interest of a Party, that confesseth not. But the Lord knows we have all more Cause to blame our selves for our coldness and remissness, than others can have to blame us for too much Fervor. I heartily wish, that both they and we were all more thoroughly baptized with this Fire.

S E C T. II.

But let us a little examine the Pretensions of our Accusers. As for the Charge of *Enthusiasm*, which some make use of to asperse what they dislike in Religion: *The Word* (saith a late learned Author †) *is of it self good, but fallen into Discredit by the Vice of Men; for there is an holy Enthusiasm; when the Soul is wholly irradiated or enlightened of God.* But taking it in the worst Sense, as it is by these Objectors, I may say of it, as Mr. Hales of Eaton once said of the Words *Schism* and *Heresy*, that it is made a *theological Scare-Crow*. For it being inconsistent with some Mens Principles to acknowledge any efficacious supernatural Operations of the Spirit of Grace upon the Heart of Man, and as contrary to their Disposition and Practice to be seriously fervent in Religion, it becomes their Interest, to brand whatsoever lies out of their Road with the opprobrious Name of *Enthusiasm*; that is (as they sometimes explain it) a Pretence of being acted by the holy Spirit, or a false conceit of Inspiration.

† *M. Martinius in Lexic. Philol.*

What the Sect of Enthusiasts was, appears sufficiently by the Testimony of those learned Men who have written against them both in former and later Times. From whom we have this Account; "That those who were censured and condemned by the Church of Christ under that Notion, were such as slighted, if not rejected, the Scriptures as a dead Letter, a lame and imperfect Guide, insufficient to be the Rule of Faith or Practice; in Room whereof they profess to be acted by immediate Revelations, which they call'd the internal and spiritual Word, teaching them higher Wisdom than any contain'd in the Scriptures. And what ever was strongly suggested to them, or made any vehement Impression upon their Minds, as that which they thought they should believe or do, they embraced it as a divine Inspiration, and magisterially imposed it upon others, were it never so inconsistent with, or opposite to the Doctrine of the holy Scriptures, or the Dictates of sound and sober Reason. And being by this Means laid open to satanical Delusions, they were easily drawn to believe the grossest Absurdities, and some of them to practice the vilest Wickednesses, contrary to common Honesty and the publick Peace, justifying all by their pretended Revelations.

This is the Character we have of Enthusiasts, both Ancient and Modern, from Authors of unquestionable Credit. And if there be any where in this World any of the Remainders of that Sect, (as it's probable enough there are) that entertain such wild and frantick Conceptions, let them bear their Sin and Shame. But of this I am sure, that the Persons thus charged by *Wolzen* and his Complices, can safely appeal to all unprejudiced Persons that know them, and to the most wise and holy God, who is greater than all, that they are as clear from any compliance with that *infatuated Generation*, as the best of their Accusers. For,

1. They heartily own and submit to the holy Scriptures, as the only sure and sufficient Rule of Faith and Life. Accordingly whatsoever Conceptions may rise within them, or be suggested to them in Matters of Religion, they bring them to the Bar of Scripture, to stand or fall according to its Judgment, not imposing their Sentiments upon the Scripture, but receiving the Sense of Scripture from the Scripture it self.

2. In Matters difficult and obscure, that are more darkly laid down in Scripture, (especially in the prophetical Part

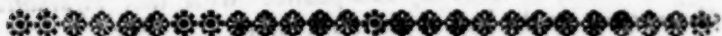
of it) they forbear to determine peremptorily, chusing rather to satisfy themselves with a modest Hesitancy, and abhorring to make their Judgments the Measure of another's Faith, or superciliously to censure or despise any for their different Apprehensions.

3. They plead for no other Spirit of Revelation, than what the Apostle prays for in Behalf of the *Ephesians*, Chap. 1. Ver. 17, 18, 19. which Revelation consists not in discovering any new *Object* to be received, unreveal'd in Scripture: but only in qualifying the *Subject* by curing the native and acquired blindness and carnality of our Minds, that we may rightly understand and embrace the Truths which the Scripture propounds.

4. They solemnly profess and declare to all the World, that whatsoever they are taught by the holy Spirit, as it is by and from the Scripture, so it is in the regular Exercise of their rational Faculties; and such as they are ready at all Times to give an Account of from Scripture-Grounds to any sober intelligent Person that shall demand it. They therefore disown and reject the absurd Principles and arrogant Presumptions of the falsely call'd *Mystical Theology*, (set on Foot anciently, and revived in later Years) that pretends to *ecstatic Raptures* and *Deifications* of the Soul, by an utter cessation of all intellectual Operations. The original of which phantastick Theology, Dr. *Meric Casaubon* derives from the Heathen Philosophers; † intimating withal, the great Affinity between this and the new *Method* so much cried up of late: Which those whom it concerns, may consider of at their Leisure.

(To be continued.)

† *Treatise concerning Enthusiasm*, Chap. 3.



A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

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